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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
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GENERAL LETTER NO. 17-D(2)-4

ISSUED BY: Bureau of Child Welfare Services,
Division of Child and Family Services

SUBJECT: Employees' Manual, Title 17, Chapter D(2), **CASE MANAGEMENT PRACTICE GUIDANCE**, Contents (page 1), revised; and pages 5 through 10, revised.

Summary

This chapter is revised to reflect:

- ◆ Deletion of the definitions of drug testing and family team meeting facilitation, as these are or will be incorporated in other parts of the manual.
- ◆ Change in references from "resource family contractor" to "recruitment and retention contractor" and definition of the support services delivered by the recruitment and retention contractor.

Effective Date

Immediately.

Material Superseded

Remove the following pages from Employees' Manual, Title 17, Chapter D(2), and destroy them:

<u>Page</u>	<u>Date</u>
Contents (page 1)	August 24, 2007
5-10	August 24, 2007

Additional Information

Refer questions about this general letter to your area social work administrator.

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The primary family-centered service intervention purchased by the Department is family safety, risk, and permanency services. This service is purchased for a wide variety of children and families to:

- ◆ Preserve the family and safely maintain children within their family home;
- ◆ Safety reunify children who have been removed from their homes; or
- ◆ Achieve alternative permanent family connections for children who cannot return home, such as an adoptive or guardianship placement.

With supervisory approval, children and families receiving family safety, risk, and permanency services may also be approved, if needed, for the following Department-funded child welfare services:

- ◆ Drug testing
- ◆ Family team meeting facilitation
- ◆ Legal services for achieving permanency
- ◆ Foster family care maintenance payments
- ◆ Shelter care payments
- ◆ Group foster care maintenance and service payments
- ◆ Protective child care assistance

Referring Children and Families to a Provider

The Department uses the five family functioning domain areas (child behavior, family safety, family interactions, parental capabilities, and home environment) to provide a common lens through which to collect and analyze information concerning children and families in the child welfare system.

These family functioning domains are used to collect and present information both in the beginning of a case, in the assessment phase, and during the Department's ongoing child welfare case management life-of-the-case process.

When making referrals for family safety, risk, and permanency services, carefully consider the case information concerning child and family strengths and areas of concern within each of the family functioning domains. Use this information to:

- ◆ Identify the key family issues and concerns within the domains that are the foundations of why the Department is involved in the case.
- ◆ Identify issues and levels of improvement that must be reached before Department involvement can be terminated.

Communicate these key areas that require service intervention to contractor staff during the referral and case transition process. Discuss with the contractor's care coordinator any case historical information on:

- ◆ Prior services,
- ◆ Ideas on specific approaches that work most effectively with the family,
- ◆ Any current court action and court expectations if applicable, and
- ◆ Other significant case issues.

Let the contractor know that the family functioning domain areas will form the framework through which case progress will be evaluated as the case moves through the child welfare system, and that the contractor is expected to tailor their service interventions and supports to focus on the areas of needs and concerns identified in the domains.

Managing Service Delivery

Link to [Policy](#)

Link to [Procedure](#)

Managing Family-Centered Services

Respect the family's strengths, cultural context, and preferences in arranging service provisions.

Work to mobilize extended family and community informal support systems that may assist the child and family. Consider the potential for relative placement if the case moves to a situation where the child may need to be placed outside the home.

If Native American ancestry or tribal affiliation for the child and family is identified, follow up on information on these connections and carefully note this information in the case record. Incorporate these cultural connections into service planning for the child and family. Follow [ICWA requirements](#) if placement of a child with potential Native American ancestry is undertaken.

Coordination With Remedial Services Program

It is very possible that children and families receiving family safety, risk, and permanency services will also be receiving remedial services program (RSP) services. The same or a different provider agency may deliver these services. Regardless of which agency is providing the RSP interventions, it will be important to:

- ◆ Discuss with the family the need to coordinate the RSP and child welfare services so it is clear which needs and issues each is focusing on;
- ◆ Have the family sign releases as needed so that service providers can communicate with each other to maximize service effectiveness;
- ◆ Ensure that any written progress concerning either service are available for review so that each provider can review summary info on case response to services; and
- ◆ Involve service providers in family team meetings to the greatest possible extent so that family service planning can be coordinated and comprehensive.

Coordination With Placement Setting

Cases receiving family safety, risk, and permanency services will sometimes include children who are in out-of-home placements such as:

- ◆ Relative care,
- ◆ Family foster care,
- ◆ Shelter care,
- ◆ Group care, and
- ◆ Supervised apartment living settings.

Family safety, risk, and permanency services contractors will be expected to communicate with the placement setting in which children in the case are placed in order to coordinate responsibilities and case service planning.

Areas where the Department worker should ensure and direct the contractor to coordinate with the placement setting include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Planning for participation by the child and the placement staff in family team meetings.
- ◆ Planning for a child's participation in family service sessions.
- ◆ Planning for children's attendance in court hearings.
- ◆ Planning and transportation arrangements for parent-child and sibling visits.
- ◆ Case crisis responses to situations that develop while the child is on a family visit.
- ◆ Collaborative planning around reunification activities and the timetable for returning the child home or moving toward another permanency option.

Coordination With Recruitment and Retention Contractor

The Department's resource family recruitment and retention contract is designed to provide a more coordinated and comprehensive system of recruiting, licensing, supporting, and retaining foster and adoptive families able provide for children in the child welfare system.

For children placed in foster or preadoptive care who are receiving family safety, risk, and permanency (FSRP) services, coordination and communication between the FSRP contractor and the recruitment and retention contractor is essential. Coordination ensures that each is aware of major case developments and the child's foster or adoptive family can receive any supports they need. Example:

The FSRP contractor is working intensively to reunify a child placed in foster care. The FSRP contractor observes that the foster family is having a difficult time supporting and adjusting to the increased parent-child visits.

The FSRP contractor communicates that observation to the recruitment and retention contractor so that the recruitment and retention contractor can work with the foster family on that issue to make this and future placements more successful.

Another area where coordination between contractors is necessary is working to support a finalized adoptive placement for a child. The recruitment and retention contractor will be working to support the child's foster family as they consider whether to pursue adoption of a child in their care. The FSRP contractor will be focusing on tasks such as:

- ◆ Helping children in the case understand the permanency goal of adoption and the reasons this is goal selected for their case,
- ◆ Helping the children deal with their feelings around the adoption process,
- ◆ Helping children and their pre-adoptive families deal with any emotional and behavioral issues,
- ◆ Working through any adoptive preplacement issues, and working on sibling connections issues.

Both contractors will also need to communicate and coordinate responses to crises involving children in foster families who are also receiving family safety, risk, and permanency services.

The contractors must communicate as a crisis is reported, so that the child's family receives crisis support from the family safety contractor and the foster family receives support from the recruitment and retention contractor to deal with their own needs, skills, and perceptions concerning the crisis. Both contractors will need to have the means to communicate on an after-hours basis when needed.

FSRP contractors will be involved and work with foster and adoptive parents on a variety of issues, including but not limited to:

- ◆ Monitoring and maintaining the safety of a child placed in foster care;
- ◆ Planning for parent-child and sibling visit, and visit supervision if needed;
- ◆ Responding to crisis situations involving the child;
- ◆ Providing family reunification activities and support;
- ◆ Performing concurrent planning activities;
- ◆ Providing child and family functioning interventions;
- ◆ Exploring permanency options for children placed in foster family care;
- ◆ Planning for adoptive placements for children.

Recruitment and retention contractors are the primary support to foster and preadoptive families. Support services can include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Assisting with behavioral management issues,
- ◆ Crisis intervention,
- ◆ Locating respite,
- ◆ Advocating with schools, DHS, JCS, or service providers for a child's case or treatment need.

The support that the recruitment and retention contractor provides is not a replacement or duplication of family safety, risk and permanency services, remedial services, or other behavioral health services.

Monitoring Service Activities

"Acceptable provision of services" means that the agreed-upon strategies, supports, services, and other intervention activities (including any safety plans) are being delivered in a timely and competent manner, consistent with the identified needs and preferences.

Timeliness of service delivery, appropriate to the urgency of need, is an important criterion of acceptability. To be adequate, the intensity and consistency of service delivery should be commensurate with that required to produce desired results for the child and family. Timeliness, competence, intensity, and consistency lead to dependability, consumer satisfaction, and positive results.

The implementation process should be dynamic and interactive, offering ongoing adaptation of service arrangements in response to frequent feedback received about changing situations, emerging needs, and results being achieved.

Maintain contact with the child and family, providers, and community resources to ensure quality, effectiveness, and appropriateness of the services and outcomes. Participate in team meetings (staffings, foster care reviews, and existing meetings) whenever possible.

Respect the family's strengths, cultural context, and preferences in arranging service provisions and selecting providers. Determine children's needs for assistance and how family-centered services can help the family learn to use family and community resources and promote self-sufficiency.